

# Ebola

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is Ebola?

Ebola is a virus that causes severe illness and often death. Symptoms include fever, headache, joint and muscle aches, weakness, diarrhea, vomiting, rashes and abdominal bleeding. Symptoms may appear anywhere from 2 to 21 days after exposure to Ebola, though 8-10 days is most common.

### How can you get Ebola?

Ebola is transmitted through direct contact with the blood or body fluids of an infected, symptomatic person or through exposure to objects (such as needles) that have been contaminated with infected secretions.

**It is important to remember that *only* if you personally visited Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia or Mali in the past 21 days OR had direct contact with a confirmed Ebola case, are you at risk of contracting Ebola.**

### Can Ebola be transmitted through the air or through contaminated food or water?

No. Ebola is not a respiratory disease like the flu, and it is not transmitted through the air. It is also not a food-borne or water-borne illness.

### Can I get Ebola from a person who is infected but does not show symptoms?

No. Individuals who do not have symptoms are not contagious. In order for the virus to be transmitted, an individual would have to have direct contact with an individual who is experiencing symptoms.

**Again, it is important to remember that *only* if you personally visited Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia or Mali in the past 21 days OR had direct contact with a confirmed Ebola case, are you at risk of contracting Ebola.**

### What is being done to protect Mississippians from Ebola?

Monitoring for disease outbreaks and emerging diseases is part of the daily operation of the Mississippi State Department of Health. We are now conducting ongoing surveillance for possible Ebola cases and are helping to prepare the healthcare community to respond effectively and safely should cases arise. This preparation includes a comprehensive Ebola response plan that is constantly updated in consultation with healthcare partners.

### What is being done to keep Americans safe?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is assisting with active screening and education efforts on the ground in West Africa to prevent sick travelers from boarding planes. Airports in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Mali are screening all outbound passengers for Ebola symptoms, including fever. In addition, all air travelers to the United States from these four countries are being screened for symptoms upon arrival. All travelers from Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Mali arriving in the U.S. are referred to local public health authorities for direct monitoring and appropriate public health protective measures.

The CDC is also actively educating healthcare workers nationwide on steps to prevent the spread of this virus, how to test and isolate suspected patients, and how they can protect themselves from infection.



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STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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Mississippi Ebola Hotline 1-877-222-9358 • [www.HealthyMS.com/Ebola](http://www.HealthyMS.com/Ebola)